



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES



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Commissioner

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Mary Ann Cooney
Director

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Dear Health Officer:

Please share this letter with your community's Animal Control Officer(s).

As was the case over the last four seasons, the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, (DHHS) in conjunction with other state and local agencies, will conduct active surveillance for West Nile virus during the 2004 season. This cooperative effort includes receiving mosquito, horse, human and bird samples and testing them for the virus.

We are interested in receiving reports of dead birds to determine areas where viral transmission, evidenced by bird die-off, is occurring. Reports may be made to the West Nile virus information line at 1-866-273-6453. As a reminder, bird testing for the 2004 season will be limited to the testing of corvids (blue jays, crows and ravens) only. Not every dead corvid will be suitable for testing, nor will all dead birds be tested.

The United States Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services, Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA WS APHIS) support we have received in prior years will not be available this season therefore **we will not have the ability to pick up birds from your community.**

When citizens of your community call the information line to report a dead bird, we will document the call and determine whether this specimen is appropriate for testing based upon pre-determined criteria, (volume of dead bird calls from this community, prior history of positives in this region, need for confirming viral transmission) and make a recommendation to the caller regarding disposal of the bird or maintaining it for later testing.

We are relying on Health Officers to inform us about their willingness or inability to participate in the collection of dead birds, so that we may notify callers from your community about the proper measures to take when a dead bird is discovered. You may call Tom Marsh, Program Coordinator, at 1-800-852-3345 x 3910 or 603-271-3910 to inform him of your intent. If we do not hear from you regarding your ability or inability to collect and transport bird specimens, we will refer callers from your community to you so that you may inform them how you prefer to manage this issue.

For those Health Officers who will be collecting birds, included with this letter is an instruction sheet describing how to do so.

Please do not submit birds for testing unless DHHS has provided prior approval.

For those select communities that had DHHS contracted routine mosquito collection over the past four seasons, mosquito collection will no longer be conducted due to budgetary reductions. Emergency trapping may be conducted in selected locations as deemed necessary by DHHS.

During the 2004 season, questions may also be directed to the West Nile Information Line at 1-866-273-6453. Please identify yourself as a health officer and the town you represent. You may also visit our website <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov> for additional information, such as test results.

Enclosed you will find information cards that should be made available to the citizens of your community.

On behalf of the Department, we thank you for your continued cooperation and support with our unified efforts to identify the presence of West Nile virus and emphasize prevention measures in our state.

Louise Merchant Hannan
Health Officer Liaison

Thomas Marsh, RN,C
Program Specialist
Bureau of Disease Control